



Federated Farmers of New Zealand

Feedback to Ashburton District Council on: Representation Review 2024

21 July 2024

**FEEDBACK ON:
ASHBRUTON DISTRICT REPRESENTATION REVIEW 2024**

To: Ashburton District Council

Name of submitter: Mid Canterbury Federated Farmers

Contact person: Rachel Thomas
Senior Policy Advisor

Introduction

- 1 Federated Farmers thanks Ashburton District Council ('the Council') for the opportunity to give feedback on the Initial Proposal.
- 2 Federated Farmers of New Zealand is a voluntary, primary sector organisation that represents farming and other rural businesses. Federated Farmers has a long and proud history of representing the needs and interests of New Zealand farmers and their communities.
- 3 Federated Farmers aims to add value to its members' farming businesses by ensuring that New Zealand provides an economic and social environment within which:
 - Our members may operate their businesses in a fair and flexible commercial environment;
 - Our members' families and their staff have access to services essential to the needs of the rural community; and
 - Our members adopt responsible management and environmental practices.
- 4 The economic importance of the agricultural sector to New Zealand's economy is well recognised. Its direct and indirect contribution to New Zealand's economy is about 15%. Land-based primary sector exports comprise over 70% of New Zealand's total exports. Any legislation or regulation which affects farm businesses has the potential to also impact, positively or negatively, on district, regional and national economies and social structure.
- 5 This submission was developed in consultation with the members and policy staff of Federated Farmers. It is important that this submission is not viewed as a single submission, but as a collective one, that represents the opinions and views of our members.

General comments

- 6 MCFF **supports the Council's Initial Proposal.** The proposal ensures rural ratepayers maintain strong representation on the Council. We commend the Council on a well thought-out proposal which adequately caters to the needs of the district's population.
- 7 The existing system whereby all councillors are elected based on ward is supported. This type of system is appropriate for the Ashburton District where there are distinct and unique needs of both urban and rural residents, and different needs across the district's landscapes of the inland Foothills and the coastal areas. Across the district, the needs of farmers differ in respect to their land type and location.

- 8 The current arrangement of nine councillors is appropriate to meet the needs of the district. The Eastern and Western wards are unique in their landscape, farm types, and climate. Having elected members who can understand and advocate for these different areas of the district is important to our members.
- 9 MCFF supports the arrangement of two councillors each for the Western and Eastern Wards. However, a reduction in the number of councillors in the Ashburton Ward is preferred although we note this may be unlikely based on the requirements in the Local Electoral Act 2001.
- 10 When considering the number of councillors required, the Council must remember rural councillors have to cover such a large geographic spread compared to their urban counterparts. Therefore there is justification to reduce the number of urban representatives but the rural representation must be maintained.

MCFF preferred arrangements

- 11 **First preference** - maintain status quo
- 12 **Second preference** - mixed system – 2 councillors for Western, 2 councillors for Eastern, 3 councillors for Ashburton Ward.

Conclusion

MCFF thanks Ashburton District Council for the opportunity to provide feedback and would like to be included in future communications.

David Acland
Mid Canterbury Provincial President